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UNCLAS VIENNA 001704

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR IO/T JCOWLEY AND EUR/AGS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ETRD SCUL AU UNESCO

SUBJECT: UNESCO CONVENTION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY: AUSTRIAN

RESPONSE

REF: STATE 089776

Ministry of Economy Supports USG Position, but...

¶1. (SBU) On May 20 Econ Unit Chief delivered reftel talking points to Helge Plank, Head of the Ministry of Economy's Multilateral Trade Affairs Services Unit. Plank acknowledged that the GoA shared USG concerns with language on "cultural goods and services" in the current convention draft. He added that the current language in Articles 5 and 20 were unacceptable to Austria. Concerning Article 20, Plank opined that it was premature to discuss which obligations would be derived from the various instruments. Plank agreed that negotiators should not push forward an unsatisfactory document to present to the UNESCO General Conference this fall. Nevertheless, Plank cautioned that the Austrian cultural community was an influential lobbying group in Austria, whose views the GoA would also consider. Plank said that the MoE has forwarded a position paper to the MFA, which had competency on this issue, arguing for replacing references to "cultural protection" with "cultural preservation."

...Ministry of Foreign Affairs Can Live With Current Text

2, (SBU) PolOff met separately on May 20 with Ilona Hoyos, head of the MFA's UNESCO Affairs Section, and Guenter Stickler of the MFA's Multilateral Trade Affairs Division to deliver reftel points. Stickler and Hoyos said the GoA could support both articles, as written, although they hoped an improved draft would emerge from the Paris session. They acknowledged the convention should be consistent with, and not supercede any existing international agreements. However, Stickler stated that the proposed USG draft of Article 20 was "too extreme." In addition, he observed that the term "States Parties" in the USG version does not meet WTO conditions, as it refers to states and not customs territories.

¶3. (SBU) Stickler and Hoyos also said that the GoA supported the use of "protect" in the convention instead of "preserve." Hoyos expressed hope that the working group would be able to report progress at the third session. Hoyos, who will represent the GoA at the May 25 session, opined that if negotiators cannot reach agreement at this session, UNESCO will ultimately convoke a fourth session.

Brown